



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds  
San Wong, Director

## **Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) Board**

### **Minutes of Regular Meeting**

Lucas State Office Building, Conference Room 320  
321 E. 12<sup>th</sup> St.  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
November 10, 2015  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Floyd Winter, Chair; Clair Rudison, Sal Alaniz, Karen Mackey (phone), Elizabeth Coonan; Jason Glass; Senator Rita Hart (ex-officio); Director San Wong (ex-officio).

**Members Absent:** Ben Jung, Anne Brown, Michele Ray-Michalec, Sherri Soich, Theresa Legg, Representative Phyllis Thede (ex-officio).

**Staff Present:** Mary Bowser, Budget Analyst; Tammi Blackstone, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (substituting for Steve Michael); Monica Stone, Division Administrator of Community Advocacy & Services; Bill Brand, Division Administrator of Community Action Agencies; Sonya Streit, Central Administration; Ann Hughes, Governor's Office.

### **1. Call to Order and Introductions**

Chair Winter called the meeting to order at approximately 10:50 a.m. A quorum was present. Introductions were made.

### **2. Action Item: Approve September 15, 2015, Minutes**

Rudison moved to approve the May 1, 2015, minutes, seconded by Glass. Motion carried by voice vote.

### **3. Department Report and Annual Report**

Director Wong presented highlights of the FY2015 Annual Report and combined the discussion with the department report. Topics of note were the expenditures and achievements of each of the divisions.

- a. The theme of annual report focuses on *impact/results* of DHR program efforts.

- b. In FY2017, DHR estimates that 78% of its state appropriation will pay for employee salaries and benefits. Administrative expenses take up most of the expenses. DHR tries to be responsive while persisting some of our strategies in which the department has invested. DHR has been on status quo budget in previous years and have absorbed costs. Vacancies were not filled after previous layoff of employees.

c. **Division of Community Action Agencies (DCAA)**

Families participating in the Family Development Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program increased their monthly wages by 330% and achieved educational goals. Additionally, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program helped 80,919 low income families meet the cost of home heating, and the Weatherization Assistance Program served 1,649 households with energy efficiency.

Brand gave an overview of the FaDSS program, explaining that it embodies what Community Action is about—empowering individuals and families. It is administered statewide and in every Iowa county. Participation in the program is voluntary. The typical FaDSS family is usually on an Iowa cash assistance program (low-income). These households face multiple barriers and FaDSS focuses on eliminating those barriers related to substance abuse, domestic violence, and low-level education. FaDSS identifies assets, build on strengths, and helps families set goals.

FaDSS partners with families, other programs and organizations. Half of its budget is from federal funds, and the rest is approximately \$6.1 million in state appropriations. The full FaDSS Annual Report will be available at the end of November 2015. FaDSS day at the capitol is January 13, 2016.

Rudison asked if there was a financial literacy program. Brand responded that referrals can be made upon the family's request, and that the Individual Development Accounts (IDA) program has a financial training component.

d. **Community Advocacy & Services (CAS)**

In FY2015, the Division helped 2,390 Iowans connect to information and assistance; provided technical assistance and/or training to 56 governmental organizations, reaching more than 1,250 individuals; and connected with thousands of individuals through outreach and education.

Stone reported that the CAS Division is undertaking a revitalized strategic direction. Until now, each of the Offices within the CAS Division has primarily worked

independently to meet the needs of their specific populations and is structurally arranged in clusters (Native Americans Affairs, Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, Latino Affairs, Status of African Americans, Persons with Disabilities, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and Deaf Services). The strategic plan creates cross-office activity and connectivity and will integrate that with the work of their Commissions. Together, they will implement strategies to increase language and communication access, increase civic engagement and participation, enhance engagement of the Department of Human Rights in our communities, and improve educational and leadership connections with youth.

The Iowa Commission of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs is putting on a three-part series regarding civic engagement. The first two parts involve a panel discussion and community dialogue. The third part will be a summit in January 2016. Examples of issues to be discussed are connecting with government, civic involvement, learning from the API community who serve or run for office and those who serve on boards and commissions, and voting.

**e. Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP)**

CJJP's three main areas of work are in data analysis, justice system research and evaluations, and juvenile justice system.

Blackstone provided an overview of the Criminal Justice information System (CJIS), noting that the computer system not only provides convenience and speed, but enhances the safety of Iowans. The system contains information such as criminal history, court dispositions, sex offender registry, and arrest warrants. The computer network allows justice practitioners and agencies to electronically access and share information.

She stated that CJIS will be the central clearinghouse for warrants. For example, if people apply for guns, there will be information regarding any warrants on the applicants.

Rudison stated that with CJIS, there is little or no support for the offender. Director Wong clarified that CJIS is designed for the exchange of information, but that there are other CJJP programs that are focused on the offender and reentry.

Blackstone gave a synopsis of the Justice Data Warehouse, a central repository of key criminal and juvenile justice information, including the prison population forecast, reentry and recidivism, and juvenile data. This information helps lawmakers with their decision-making and planning for resources.

Director Wong added that CJJP applied for and received two grants: one on Girls Justice Initiative, and one on Juvenile Reentry Systems. Several initiatives have been

implemented both on adult reentry and on the juvenile justice side that help address and reduce the disproportionate minority contact in the state.

#### **4. Action Item: Approve FY2015 DHR Annual Report**

Coonan moved to approve the FY2015 Annual Report, seconded by Rudison. Motion carried by voice vote. Chair Winter thanked all those who contributed to the report.

Chair Winter acknowledged the challenge of the state's changing demographics and the increased needs of vulnerable populations, but that the level of resources remains the same. Director Wong stated that the key is to find a balance between responding to those needs and persisting with our work and the department will continue to do that with its collaborative partners. Resources become more constrained but the department doesn't want to leave the populations that we serve behind, so it finds ways to be more efficient while still being responsive.

#### **5. Iowa Criminal Justice Summit 2015**

Chair Winter and those who attended the Iowa Criminal Justice Summit shared their thoughts about the program. They appreciated the range of speakers from offenders to legislators to judges and their views of justice reform. We have existing resources to help with reentry, and we should be accessing those services more.

#### **6. Board Member Updates**

##### **➤ Office of Latino Affairs**

Alaniz feels encouraged by the work of the Department of Human Rights. As Chair of the Latino affairs, he has had opportunity to visit with other Commissioners about seeking change systemically. Lacking two commissioners, Alaniz believes that the new, full commission's goals will be in alignment with CAS. Director Wong stated that the Boards and Commissions Director position in the Governor's Office is vacant, so it has slowed down the process of filling the commission vacancies. Alaniz also stated that interviews are taking place for the Executive Officer 1 position for the Office of Latino Affairs

##### **➤ Office on the Status of Women**

Coonan has been diligently working on developing strategic plan of the Commission on the Status of Women. One of the main points of the plan is bringing the Commission into alignment with the goals and priorities of DHR. Other priorities include ensuring and facilitating statewide efforts to advocate for the need of women and girls in Iowa and putting a support system to make sure that Iowa women are reaching their fullest potential.

Coonan had discussions surrounding the Christine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice which is typically awarded at the same time as the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame ceremony. The Commission decided to put some protocols on the application process and will cast a wider net for submission of names and bios of those who would be deserving of that award.

The Commission is considering undertaking the process for selecting the honorees for the Iowa Women Achievement Bridge. No new women have been added to the bridge. Principal Financial had started that project and now has asked the Commission to take applications, publicize it, and select the recipients. The Commission is considering if that fits with their mission/vision.

Staff is revamping the Write Women Back into History contest, which now includes an option to submit a video and has expanded the eligible grades from 6-9 to grades 5-10.

➤ **Office on the Status of African Americans**

Rudison, as a Commissioner on the Status of African Americans and as an employee of the Evelyn Davis Center, completed the steering committee's attempt to develop a reentry wrap around program for those who have been incarcerated. Rudison visited prisons and obtained information about inmates three months before their release, so that those who come to the Des Moines area can receive service. The plan is to implement it statewide through the community college system.

There is an event on November 23, 2015, at the Holiday Inn downtown—a meet and greet with Senator Chuck Grassley. Rudison has worked extensively with Des Moines pastors and ministers to attempt to get some leeway for African American contractors to have opportunities to bid for jobs at the Department of Transportation. The issue with other companies is that some contractors cannot get required bonding.

Rudison is directly working with the Des Moines Public Schools on the cultural diversity recruitment program to recruit, attract, and retain African American teachers and administrators to Des Moines. Rudison spoke with law enforcement because they have trouble recruiting minority officers.

Rudison attended the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) Southridge Center to speak with a group called “Smart Step”, a group of young people who have been incarcerated. Rudison advised them that there's help and life after being incarcerated and told them about the services and resources available around the city.

➤ **Senator Rita Hart**

Senator Hart appreciated comments about funding. The legislature is facing another difficult session when it comes to budget. There is much focus on education. Lots of things have happened since the end of the last session such as Medicaid reorganization.

## **7. Public Comment**

No members of the public were in attendance.

## **8. Next Meeting**

Director Wong shared that the 2015 DHR Day included a legislative breakfast, commission meetings, and the DHR Board meeting. It was a great opportunity for the commission to participate in the breakfast and connect with legislators. She would like to do the same thing in 2016. DHR Day is scheduled for March 3, 2016, and the Board will also have its regular meeting that day.

## **9. Adjourn**

Chair Winter asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Rudison and seconded by Glass. The motion carried by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m.